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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 000449

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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/WE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN: ZAPATERO INVESTED AS PRESIDENT, SELECTS NEW  
CABINET

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Classified By: DCM Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero was elected President on April 11 with only the 169 votes of his Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE). Zapatero eschewed forming alliances that would have produced an absolute majority in the first vote round in Congress. The Popular Party (PP) voted against him and deputies from smaller parties abstained. Zapatero took the oath of office before King Juan Carlos April 12 and announced his new cabinet the same day. The cabinet reflects Zapatero's campaign promises to focus on innovation, equality and the environment. This is the first Spanish cabinet with more women than men. Several key players from the first Zapatero administration will keep their jobs, including Vice Presidents de la Vega and Solbes, Foreign Minister Moratinos, and Interior Minister Rubalcaba. An important change is the shift of Carme Chacon from Minister of Housing to Minister of Defense. Two new Ministries have been added: a Ministry of Equality and a Ministry of Science and Innovation. Other Ministries were restructured. Environment and Agriculture have merged. The Ministry of Education, Social Affairs and Sports will include social affairs but lose its science portfolio. The Labor Ministry will pick up immigration affairs. Speaking of foreign policy during the investiture debate, Zapatero talked hopefully of a new chapter in the U.S.-Spanish bilateral relationship, facing common challenges together, and intensifying cooperation. END SUMMARY.

NEW CABINET

12. (U) Zapatero's new cabinet includes:

First Vice President for the Presidency Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega;  
Second Vice President for Economy and Finance Pedro Solbes;  
Minister of Foreign Affairs Miguel Angel Moratinos;  
Minister of Justice Mariano Fernandez Bermejo;  
Minister of Defense Carme Chacon;  
Minister of Interior Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba;  
Minister of Public Works (Fomento) Magdalena Alvarez;  
Minister of Equality Bibiana Aido;  
Minister of Education, Social Affairs and Sport Mercedes Cabrera;  
Minister of Labor and Immigration Celestino Corbacho;  
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Commerce Miguel Sebastian;  
Minister of Environment and Marine and Rural Environs (Agriculture) Elena Espinosa;  
Minster of Public Administration Elena Salgado;  
Minister of Culture Cesar Antonio Molina;  
Minister of Health Bernat Soria;

Minister of Science and Innovation Cristina Garmendia; and Minister of Housing Beatriz Corredor.

¶3. (C) Perceived "winners" include Carme Chacon, who moves up from being Minister of Housing and who captured much of the press attention by virtue of being the first woman to serve as Minister of Defense. Commentators focused on the novelty of having an expectant mother (Chacon is seven months pregnant) leading the most tradition-bound branch of government. Despite remaining in their influential positions, Solbes and Rubalcaba may not be entirely satisfied with the new cabinet line-up. Although nominally under Solbes' umbrella, Solbes' rival Miguel Sebastian (a Zapatero insider) now heads the Ministry of Industry and manages the energy portfolio that Solbes sought to bring under his control (Sebastian was often perceived to be competing with Solbes for control of economic policy when he was chief economic advisor in the Office of the Presidency from 2004-2006). Also, Sebastian allies were named as Ministers of Housing and of Science and Innovation, allowing them to manage huge budgets. In the case of Rubalcaba, he had reportedly hoped to be named to a newly created vice presidency that never materialized. Also, he tried and failed to place allies at MOD in charge of the intelligence service (CNI) and in the Presidency. Other losers were former Environment Minister Cristina Narbona, who will be appointed Ambassador to the OECD, and former Labor Minister Caldera, who goes off to create a PSOE think-tank which is supposed to be the counterpoint to former President Aznar's think-tank FAES. It is expected that departing Defense Minister Jose Antonio Alonso, now the PSOE's Spokesman in Congress, and Jose Blanco, the PSOE's Secretary of Organization and the mastermind of Zapatero's reelection campaign, will continue to be Zapatero's closest personal advisors.

#### STRUCTURAL CHANGES

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¶4. (U) Two new Ministries have been added that fulfill Zapatero's campaign promises. For the first time, the government will have a Minister of Equality, Bibiana Aido, and a Minister of Science and Innovation, Cristina Garmendia. The Ministry of Equality is charged with applying the national Law of Equality, reducing the salary gap between men and women, and leading the campaign against domestic violence. The Ministry of Science and Innovation will be in charge of competitiveness programs that previously were implemented by the Ministries of Education and Industry. It will direct the national universities, scientific investigation and technological development.

¶5. (C) Three other Ministries were restructured. The Environment Ministry merged with the Agriculture Ministry and has a broad mandate that includes agriculture, fisheries, water (an increasingly controversial topic in drought-ridden Spain), food production, livestock, hunting, and firefighting. It also is charged with addressing climate change, desertification and drought. The merged Environment/Agriculture portfolio could help our GMO/agriculture biotech efforts. The former Agriculture Ministry has been supportive of GMOs in the past, while former Environment Minister Narbona opposed them. Those inter-ministry debates will now be thrashed out within one bureaucracy. Also, Science and Innovation Minister Garmendia, who used to work for a (non-agriculture) biotechnology industry group, may be an ally on GMO issues in Cabinet discussions. The Education, Social Affairs and Sports Ministry is restructured to include social affairs, while it lost the science portfolio. It is charged with implementing the Law of Dependents that provides services for families in crisis and individuals who require support from the government. The Labor Ministry is restructured to include immigration affairs. It is charged with promoting

social dialogue between labor unions and management along with combating illegal immigration. Its goal is to create two million new jobs during the next four years.

#### HINTS ON FOREIGN POLICY

16. (U) During the investiture debate, Zapatero described Spain as unequivocally European in its orientation, but regarding the U.S. he said his government hoped to "open a new chapter in our relationship: looking to the future, based on mutual respect, facing common challenges together, and intensifying cooperation." He emphasized Spain's role as a bridge between Europe and Iberoamerica, working to strengthen unity, fight inequality and consolidate democracy. He said Spain would defend peace through multilateral solutions to conflicts while contributing generously to the fight against poverty. He highlighted Spain's Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2010. (Note: it is rumored that one of the reasons Zapatero kept Moratinos on board was to provide continuity through Spain's EU Presidency. End Note). He said Spain would promote stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean through the Barcelona Process (he did not mention French President Sarkozy's EuroMed proposals). Zapatero called for combating terrorism, increasing law enforcement and judicial cooperation, and expanding civil society exchanges. He said sub-Saharan Africa would be the focus of a new Plan Africa for 2008-2012 which would advance peace and democracy; development; and political, economic and cultural ties along with closer cooperation on migration. He underscored a preference for multilateral solutions to conflict, saying Spain would defend international law in the face of arbitrary actions. He noted Spanish support for international peacekeeping and called for the new legislature to continue authorizing PKO. Zapatero said he would move forward with modernization of the armed forces.

#### COMMENT

17. (C) We will provide biographic information via septel, but some of the key players in this new government are well known to us. Moratinos and Rubalcaba are well-known quantities and we can work with them. Although Carme Chacon has no experience in defense issues, she is a savvy parliamentarian who will seek to bolster Congressional support for the government's defense and security initiatives, including in Afghanistan. She has always been open and accessible to us and is a self-proclaimed friend of the U.S. She is also believed to have Zapatero's ear. The Ambassador has already begun reaching out to the new cabinet members.

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